Quantum of imports of petrol and diesel

(Quantity in Thousand Metric Tonnes)

Product	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05 (Upto Sept. 04)
Petrol	NIL	NIL	NIL	NIL
Diesel	31	106	100	80

National Manufacturing and Competitiveness Council

482. DR. VIJAY MALLYA:
SHRI RAJEEV SHUKLA:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have set up the National Manufacturing and Competitiveness Council to advise Government on measures to restructure Public Sector Enterprises and on disinvestments;

(b) whether the Investment Commission and Board for Reconstruction of Public Sector Enterprises proposed earlier in the Budget 2004-05 are being set up;

(c) if so, whether it would not result in overlapping of functions of these institutions; and

(d) whether any decision has been taken in this regard and if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI S.S. PALANIMANICKAM): (a) Yes, Sir. The Government has set up an autonomous National Manufacturing and Competitiveness Council under the administrative control of the Department of Industrial Policy & Promotion. However, the mandate of this council is not to advise the Government on measures to restructure Public Sector Enterprises and/or on disinvestment, but to advise it on industrial and sector specific initiatives required for enhancing competitiveness of Indian industry in areas like research and development, entrepreneurship promotion, infrastructure enhancing facilities, trade and fiscal policies and employment generation.

(b) Yes Sir. The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs has approved the setting up of an Investment commission and the Board for Reconstruction of Public Sector Enterprises (BRPSE).

(c) and (d) The functions of the three institutions are not likely to overlap as each of them have distinct terms of reference. While the National Manufacturing and Competitiveness Council has been constituted to advise

the Government on industrial and sector specific initiatives required for enhancing competitiveness of Indian industry, the BRPSE is expected to advise the Government on ways and means for strengthening Public Sector Enterprises and to critically examine the proposals for revival, rehabilitation and reconstruction of sick or loss making Public Sector Enterprises. On the other hand, the mandate of the Investment Commission would be to make recommendations to the Government on both policy and procedures to facilitate greater foreign direct investment flows in India and to encourage investment in sectors where there is dire need for investment but adequate investment has not flowed so far.

Attachment of property by assessing officials of IT

483. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have issued directives to IT officials that they can attach any body's assets if the assessing officer thinks that a company/individual may not pay up the tax demand;

(b) whether it is also a fact that even the apprehension that there could be difficulty in recovering the tax demand would be sufficient ground for provisional attachment;

(c) if so, whether this does not tantamount to empowering the assessing officer with extensive powers; and

(d) whether this does not tantamount to introducing Inspector Raj, while the PM is very much against this Raj?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI S.S. PALANIMANICKAM): (a) Directions have been issued to the field formations advising them to exercise powers provided under Section 281B of the Income Tax Act, 1961 in suitable cases where they have a reasonable belief that recovery may be difficult due to inadequacy of assets.

(b) No, Sir. The following safeguards are in-built into Section 281B of the Income Tax Act, 1961 with a view to ensuring its proper use;

(i) The provisional attachment can be made by an order in writing by an Assessing Officer only with the prior approval of the Chief Commissioner/Commissioner of Income Tax.

(ii) It can be done only for six months at a time.